

INTRODUCTION TO AFRICANA STUDIES

SPRING 2023: M/W 10:15-11:44

Room: Annenberg 111

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Teaching Assistants:

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Course Description

This course is a survey of Africana Studies as an academic discipline in American universities. The purpose is to provide students with an historical overview of the formation of the field of study in relationship to the ongoing racialized, gendered, and classed experiences of African-descendant peoples. Importance will be given to the history of Black student activism resulting in the development of Africana Studies at universities in the US Northeast such as the Africana Studies department at the University of Pennsylvania. Through close readings of texts and media, we will emphasize topics and issues concerning scholars in the field. We will explore questions of Black agency in shaping the intellectual and political landscape of this country and global processes deeply impacting US Black culture such as transatlantic slavery, apartheid in South Africa, and anti-colonial struggles in Africa and the Caribbean. Special emphasis will be paid to the social, cultural, intellectual and political contributions that Black women have made and continue to make in the United States and the broader African diasporic community.

Course Objectives:

- Understand the history of the development of Africana Studies as a distinct field of study;
- Illustrate the significance of key scholars and conceptual tools in the Black radical tradition;

- Define key terms pertinent to the Africana experience such as: diaspora, racial formation, gendered racism/anti-racism, representation, freedom, citizenship, Black agency, power, and hegemony;
- Demonstrate how racial prejudice and the anti-racism struggle have shaped the lives of African-descendant peoples in the United States and beyond;
- Explore important questions shaping the past, present, and future of humanistic and social scientific research in Africana Studies.

Learning Goals:

- Develop ability to identify theoretical trends in classic and contemporary texts in the field;
- Analyze texts and engage with authors through critical reading and interpretative writing;
- Write essays and papers focused on texts that have a thesis, substantiate an original argument with evidence, and arrive at a reasoned conclusion;
- Understand the basic principles of academic integrity and citation policies;
- Connect the intellectual work to other disciplines and real-world life experiences;
- Articulate interconnections between race, gender, sexuality, ability, nation and other identities that shape our subjectivities and political engagement;
- Develop a deeper understanding of the broader purpose of knowledge production.

Class Time Allotment and Feedback

The total of in-class hours and out-of-class work for this course is about 180 hours over the semester. Students seeking to maximize their learning can expect to spend 42 hours in class (3 hours per week for 14 weeks) and 140 hours of reading, writing, and preparing for class discussions (approx. 10 hours per week for 14 weeks). Actual times will vary for each student; final grades are not determined by the amount of time a student spends on the course.

Statement on Inclusion

The University of Pennsylvania is committed to full inclusion of all students from around the world. As a professor I value unique cultural perspectives, including students whose primary academic training has not been in English.

Please inform me early in the term if you have a disability or other conditions that might require accommodation or modification of any of these course procedures. You may speak with me after class or during office hours.

For more information, please contact the Weingarten Center at 215-573-9235 that offers confidential support to all Penn students in reaching their academic goals. The Center offers learning consultations to assist students with learning strategies related to time and project management, academic reading and writing, note-taking, and exam preparation, among other needs. The Center also provides free tutoring individually or in small groups that involve support for understanding course concepts and critical reading and writing.

Statement on Academic Integrity

All student work in this class must be the result of the student's original thoughts and study. I expect all ideas to be produced without assistance and stated in the student's own words, except as quotations marks and references that acknowledge the use of other sources. If you have any questions about what constitutes a violation of academic integrity, please become familiar with [Penn's Code of Academic Integrity](#).

Grading Criteria

Your final grade will result from the following components:

1. **Class Participation + Attendance.** Your participation in class discussion is required and should focus on the critical engagement with the course readings, films, and peer comments. You are permitted three absences and

you are not required to give any explanation. After three absences, I will deduct one full letter grade from your final grade (15% of the grade).

2. **Four Response Papers (500-750 words):** You will be assigned to a small group on Canvas, and you will submit individual papers on the dates assigned to your group. These brief papers should provide a critical evaluation of the primary arguments and perspectives from the texts and must conclude with one or two relevant questions that you would like the class to address. You are required to post these papers on Canvas the night before class and be prepared to discuss them in class (10% each; 40% of final grade).
3. **Midterm (February 27th) and Final Exam (To be assigned by University Registrar):** Responding to essay questions I provide, you will be required to write a critical analysis of the course materials (texts and films) (20% each; 40% of final grade).
4. **Final Oral Exam (2 minutes; April 17th and 19th):** Responding to a question I provide one day before class, you will be required to prepare a brief and concise oral presentation to the class (5% of the final grade).
5. **Extra Credit (2 pages; Due one day after the event):** You may attend any related event at Penn or in the city of Philadelphia and write a response paper about the experience and how it relates to the course material or class discussions. These responses do not replace the weekly essays (2 points each, maximum 6 points).

Schedule of Readings

Week 1	A Basic Introduction: Why Africana Studies?
1/11	Discussion of the syllabus and course requirements In-class video and discussion: Underground Harriet Tubman episode , "Minty" (2017)
Week 2	The Formation of Black Studies in American Universities
1/16	MLK Day (No class meeting) Martin Luther King , "Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence" (April 4, 1967)
1/18	St. Claire Drake , "Black Studies and Global Perspectives: An Essay" (1984) Edmund T. Gordon , "The Austin School Manifesto: An Approach to Black or African Diaspora" (2016)
Week 3	Black Protest Tradition and Black Studies
1/ 23	Vincent Harding, "The Role of the Black Scholar in the Struggles for the Black Community" (1974) Ibram X. Kendi, "Required Service-Learning Courses: A Disciplinary Necessity to Preserve the Decaying Social Mission of Black Studies" (2010) Martha Biondi, "Controversial Blackness: The Historical Development and Future Trajectory of African American Studies" (2011) In-class Video: <i>San Francisco State Strike 1968</i> Document Analysis: SFSU Demands Recommended: Noliwe Rooks, "White Money, Black Power: The Ford Foundation and Black Studies" (2007)
1/25	Guest Lecturer: Dr. Bedour Alagraa, "The Philosophy of Black Studies"

David Scott, "The Re-Enchantment of Humanism: An Interview with Sylvia Wynter" (2000)

Sylvia Wynter, " 'No Humans Involved': An Open Letter to My Colleagues" (1994); "How We Mistook the Map for the Territory and Re-Imprisoned Ourselves in Our Unbearable Wrongness of Being, of Désêtre: Black Studies Toward the Human Project" (2005)

Week 4 Decolonizing Episteme

1/30 Kealeboga Ramaru, "Black Feminist Reflections on the Rhodes Must Fall Movement at UCT" (2018)

Xolela Mangcu, "Shattering the Myth of a Post-Racial Consensus in South African Higher Education: 'Rhodes Must Fall' and the Struggle for the Transformation at the University of Cape Town" (2017)

2/1 Oyèrónkẹ́ Oyěwùmí, "Colonizing Bodies and Minds" (1997)

Ngugi wa Thiong'o, "The Language of African Literature" (1986)

Week 5 The Afterlives of Slavery

2/6 Abdias Nascimento, "Quilombismo: An Afro-Brazilian Political Alternative" (1980)

Cheryl Harris, "Whiteness as Property" (1993)

Saidiya Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, "The Burdened Individuality of Freedom" (1997)

2/8 Guest Lecturer: Ms. Niija Wright, W.E.B. DuBois, "Of Our Spiritual Strivings," "Of the Dawn of Freedom" (1903)

José Itzigsohn and Karida L. Brown, "Double Consciousness: The Phenomenology of Racialized Subjectivity" (2020)

Week 6 Toward an African Revolution

2/13 In-class film: *Frantz Fanon, His Life, Struggle and Work* (2018)

2/15 Guest Lecturer: Ms. Senit Kidane; Readings to be assigned.

Week 7 African Gender Studies

2/20 Guest Lecturer: Dr. Shamara Alhassan, "Rastafari Women in a Pan-African Perspective"

" 'This Movement is Not About the Man Alone': Toward a Rastafari Woman's Studies" (2020); " 'We Stand for Black Livin!': Trodding the Path of Rastafari in Ghana" (2020)

2/22 Ayo A. Coly, "Un/Clothing African Womanhood: Colonial Statements and Postcolonial Discourses of the African Female Body" (2015)

Nicosia Shakes, "Race, the Public Sphere, and Sexual Violence in the Mothertongue Project's *Walk: South Africa*" (2021)

Week 8 Race and Nation

2/27 Mid-term Exam

3/1 In-class Film: Nathalie Etoke, *Afro-Diasporic French Identities* (2015)

Week 9 (3/6 + 3/8)	No class meetings – SPRING BREAK
Week 10	Basic Tenets of African Diaspora Feminisms
3/13	Carole Boyce Davies, "Introduction: Recovering the Radical Black Female Subject" (2008) Claudia Jones, "An End to the Neglect of the Problems of Negro Women" (2011[1949]) In-class video: Stacyann Chin, "Tsunami Rising" (2019)
3/15	Combahee River Collective Statement Kimberlé Crenshaw , "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics" (1989) In-class video: Kimberlé Crenshaw, "The Urgency of Intersectionality" (2016)
Week 11	Black Left Feminism
3/20	Dr. Maziki Thame, "Black Women in Caribbean Politics" "Woman Out of Place: Portia Simpson-Miller and Middle-Class Politics in Jamaica" (2018)
3/22	Guest Lecturer: Dr. Edilza Sotero, "Black Women and Politics in Brazil" Keisha-Khan Y. Perry and Edilza Sotero, "Black Women on the Left of the Left in Brazilian Politics" (2022); "Amefricanidade: The Black Diaspora Feminism of Lélia Gonzalez" (2019)
Week 12	Sexual Freedom
3/27	Guest Lecturer: Dr. Melanie White, "Black Women's Sexual Autonomy on the Caribbean Coast of Nicaragua" Readings to be assigned. Recommended: Audre Lorde, "Uses of the Erotic" (1978); Xavier Livermon, "Usable Traditions: Creating Sexual Autonomy in Postapartheid South Africa" (2015)
3/29	Guest Lecturer: Dr. Watufani Poe, "Black LGBTQ Politics in Afro-Latin America" "Represenção vs. Representatividade: Analyzing Black LGBTQ+ Identity Politics in Brazil" (2023); "A Quare Eye to Slavery: Black Homoerotic Encounters in Brazil and Cuba" (2021) Recommended: Jafari S. Allen, "Introduction: Black/Queer/Diaspora at the Current Conjunction" (2012)
Week 13	The Rebellious Spirit
4/3	Guest Lecturer: Dr. Jonathan Fenderson, "Race, Rights and Rebellion in Black America" Readings to be assigned.
4/5	In-class film: Kurt Orderson, "Not in My Neighbourhood" (2018)
Week 14	Abolition
4/10	Ruha Benjamin, Chapters 1 and 7 in <i>Viral Justice: How We Grow the World We Want</i> (2022); "Retooling Solidarity, Reimagining Justice" (2019)

4/12 Audre Lorde, "The Master's Tool Will Never Dismantle the Master's House" (1983)
bell hooks, *Salvation: Black People and Love* (2001); "Introduction," "The Issue of Self-Love" and "Loving Justice" (2001)

Week 15 Final Oral Exam

4/17 Final Oral Exam – Day 1

4/19 Final Oral Exam – Day 2

Week 16 Final Exam Preparation

4/24 Study Discussion led by TAs

4/26 Study Discussion led by TAs

Reading Days (April 27-30)

Week 17 Final Exam Due